



U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service

Annual Report

*Great Lakes - Big Rivers Region
Fiscal Year 2002*





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About the Report

The Great Lakes-Big Rivers Fiscal Year 2002 Annual Report is produced by the Region 3 External Affairs Office. This report highlights accomplishments and activities submitted via the Region's Accomplishment Reporting System.

The report is a compilation of the Region's monthly informational publication "Inside Region 3." The full narrative text of all the Region's accomplishments can be searched and viewed via the Accomplishment Reporting System on the Internet at <http://ars.fws.gov>.

Comments or questions concerning this report or the Accomplishment Reporting System should be addressed to Chuck Traxler at 612-713-5313 or email at charles_traxler@fws.gov.

About the Cover



- USFWS Photo by Chuck Traxler

Iron River National Fish Hatchery Biologist Steve Redman checks a Fyke's net during a brook trout assessment on Isle Royale National Park.

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A Message From the Regional Director

As you can tell by the size of this report, Fiscal Year 2002 was a busy one for the Great Lakes-Big Rivers Region.

The Region is dedicated to conserving our nation's natural resources, working with our many partners, providing high-quality internal and external communication and meeting the needs of the American people.

This Annual Report was assembled from field reports submitted through the Region 3 Accomplishment Reporting System and highlights only a few of the more than 1,020 accomplishment reports submitted in Fiscal Year 2002.

By developing trust and creating a successful working relationship with our many state, tribal, private and nongovernmental conservation partners, Region 3 was able to leverage \$114 million with \$621 million in partner resources to provide a benefit of more than \$730 million for the people and natural resources of the Midwest.

A particular point of pride for me this year is that 8,324 volunteers logged more than 223,000 hours at field stations across the Region. These volunteers share our passion for the resources we manage and enable us to do our job more effectively.

Each of our programs are dedicated to completing their individual missions, as well as to working together to complete the overall mission of the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service. A few of the program's accomplishment highlights are listed below:

National Wildlife Refuge System

All Region 3 refuges are getting ready to "Celebrate a Century of Conservation" in 2003; committees are formed, plans are implemented and our partners are ready to help us celebrate.

This year we added three new Friends groups to bring the regional

total to 25. Just one example of the benefits these groups bring to the refuge system is the \$250,000 the Friends of Squaw Creek refuge secured to help construct an addition to the refuge's visitor center.

Endangered Species

This was the second successful year of the on-going eastern whooping crane reintroduction project. The project, designed to reestablish an eastern flock of migratory whooping cranes, involves an international partnership of state, federal and nongovernmental agencies, as well as private citizens.

Law Enforcement

This year brought the conclusion of a multi-year investigation code-named "Operation Snowplow." The investigation has so far resulted in the successful indictment and prosecution of 16 individuals involved in the illegal trafficking of endangered tigers, leopards and other exotic animals throughout the U.S.

Fisheries

The Regional hatchery program raised and stocked more than 11 million fish this year and has expanded its operation by beginning to produce endangered mussels.

Monitoring and controlling aquatic nuisance species such as zebra mussels, ruffe, round goby and sea lamprey is also a major focus. An estimated 3.5 million sea lamprey were destroyed this year through the Region's sea lamprey control stations.

Migratory Birds and State Programs

This office is highly involved in the whooping crane project, but has also had great success with the Prairie Pothole Joint Venture, helping to increase breeding duck populations.

The program also manages the



Bill Hartwig
Great Lakes - Big River Regional Director

regional migratory bird permit system and facilitated the management of \$4.8 million in North American Wetland Conservation Act grants.

External Affairs

Ensuring the public, Congress and our many partners know what we are doing is the job of External Affairs.

This year the program improved its congressional and media notification systems, improved the accomplishment reporting system and facilitated thousands of print articles and many hours of broadcast coverage throughout the Region.

Budget and Administration

This office continued to ensure that the financial, personnel, contracting and information technology aspects of the Region function smoothly.

The office initiated many new Internet-based tracking programs and hosted training on all aspects of administration.

I hope you enjoy sharing in the successes of Region 3 and I want to thank all our employees for their exceptional work and dedication to the people and natural resources of the Great Lakes-Big Rivers Region.

Bill Hartwig
Great Lakes-Big Rivers Regional Director

Fiscal Year 2002 Annual Work Plan

This plan outlines Region 3 priorities for Fiscal Year 2002 to help achieve the Service's mission of *"Working with other to conserve, protect and enhance fish, wildlife, and plants and their habitats for the continuing benefit of the American people."*

Principle Mission Goals

Sustainability of Fish and Wildlife Populations	Conserve, protect, restore and enhance fish, wildlife and plant populations entrusted to our care.
Habitat Conservation: A Network of Lands & Waters	Conserve an ecologically diverse network of lands and waters - of various ownerships - providing habitats for fish, wildlife and plant resources.
Public Use and Enjoyment	Provide opportunities to the public to enjoy, understand and participate in the use and conservation of fish and wildlife resources.
Partnership in Natural Resources	Support and strengthen partnerships with tribal, state and local governments and others in their effort to conserve and enjoy fish, wildlife, plants and their habitats.

Management Principles

Invest in Our People	The Service is focused on building a workforce that is representative of the public we serve and dedicated to the Service's mission. Investments will be made to: Recruit and develop a workforce for the future; Provide training and promote continuous learning; Recognize and celebrate success; Retain our current expertise; and, Ensure a safe and healthy work environment.
Promote Partnerships	Partnerships are to include representatives from a variety of groups and become truly collaborative efforts. External partnerships will include equal partners representing states, tribes, non-profits, the Service and other interested parties. Internal partnerships will include participation from other regions and programs, as appropriate.
Focus on Customer Expectations	Customer satisfaction is vital to the success of the Service. Customers include the public as well as other employees. To ensure our customers are satisfied, we will continue to improve communication with our customers. We need to understand our customer needs, report our accomplishments and seek feedback to continuously improve our level of service.

Resource Principles

Implement Conservation Priorities	Fully implement the Region 3 Conservation Priorities by completing a geographic analysis of species occurrence, identifying habitat priorities and focus areas, and stepping the results down organizationally through the programs, ecosystem teams and field stations.
Integrated Outreach	Develop a Regional outreach strategy/plan to ensure coordination of the Region's efforts to educate the public about the Service's mission and our activities and accomplishments to achieve this mission.

Fiscal Year 2002 Annual Work Plan

Ecosystem Priorities

Provide leadership and direction through partnerships, for the conservation of shared natural resources of concern.

Assess the status and distribution of Regional Resource Conservation Priority Species within each ecosystem to enhance management decision making.

Focus habitat protection, restoration and management for the benefit of Regional Resource Conservation Priority species.

Program Priorities

Ecological Services



Dakota Skipper

- Photo by Robert Dana

Service biologists are working with partners to develop conservation agreements to preclude the need to list this butterfly as endangered.

Identify and implement measures on and off Service lands to recover threatened and endangered species.

Develop and implement approaches to work collaboratively to conserve candidate species to help preclude the need to list them.

Coordinate and implement restorations resulting from settlements or judgments in Natural Resource Damage Assessment (NRDA) cases.

Identify and implement measures to prevent or minimize expansion of invasive species to facilitate conservation of declining native species and help preclude the need to list additional species.

Develop and implement collaborative approaches that address coastal issues affecting priority Great Lakes fish and wildlife species and associated habitats.

National Wildlife Refuge System



- USFWS photo by Mary Stefanski

Refuges across the Region are preparing for the increase in visitors and attention they will receive during the Centennial year.

Increase discretionary funding to the field for resource work.

Pending any needed final approvals, begin operations of three new Refuge System units: Glacial Ridge, Fairfield Marsh and Middle Mississippi.

Fully support completion of scheduled Comprehensive Conservation Plans.

Increase awareness of Region 3 Refuge System accomplishments by engaging Congress and new Service and Department leadership.

Actively engage all Regional programs and employees in the Refuge System Centennial Campaign and outreach activities.

Fiscal Year 2002 Annual Work Plan

Program Priorities

Migratory Birds and State Programs



- USFWS photo

The Migratory Birds Division is using the whooping crane reintroduction project as a platform to increase public awareness of wetland issues impacting all migratory birds.



- USFWS photo by Chuck Traxler

The Federal Aid Division continues to work with state governments to protect fish and wildlife habitat and provide hunting and fishing opportunities for the public.

The Region 3 Joint Venture Office will pursue actions which will better position Great Lakes/Upper Mississippi Joint Venture to deliver the "All Bird Conservation" vision of the North American Bird Conservation Initiative.

Support will be provided for the re-establishment of whooping cranes in the Great Lakes-Big Rivers Region. This effort provides a platform for increasing awareness of wetland values for many migratory bird species and other wetland wildlife.

Migratory bird surveys will be coordinated and conducted to facilitate sound management. Development of survey protocols for species which are currently poorly surveyed will be supported. We will undertake an analysis of Regional monitoring efforts and, in conjunction with refuges, develop an integrated program for Service nongame bird monitoring.

The Migratory Bird Division will take a leadership role in developing, coordinating, and implementing landscape-level bird conservation planning initiatives, focusing on the Regional components of Partners in Flight (land birds), the U. S. Shorebird Conservation Plan and the North American Waterbird Conservation Plan. Included in this effort will be the development of effective habitat models for priority species and use of those models to identify target areas for achieving effective and efficient conservation.

The Migratory Bird Division will continue to provide technical assistance to Refuges to ensure that migratory bird issues are addressed in refuge Comprehensive Conservation Plans. In FY 02, we will focus on CCPs for Crab Orchard, Grand Kankakee Marsh, Minnesota Valley, Muscatatuck and Sherburne National Wildlife Refuges.

The Migratory Bird Division will participate in Mississippi Flyway Council and Technical Section so that Service initiatives can be presented and Council issues can be addressed from the Region's perspective.

The Federal Aid Division will respond to audit findings and work with the states to develop corrective action plans that will resolve problems and improve program delivery.

The Federal Aid Division will work with the states on process improvements to streamline grant requirements and improve program efficiency.

The Federal Aid Division will work with Ecological Services Division to identify new approaches to Section 7 and NEPA compliance issues to ensure accountability while streamlining the process.

The Federal Aid Division will provide leadership to maintain and strengthen the strong relationship between the states and the Service to protect, conserve and restore fish and wildlife resources.

Fiscal Year 2002 Annual Work Plan

Program Priorities

Law Enforcement



- USFWS photo

Operation Snowplow resulted in the prosecution of several individuals illegally killing and trading endangered tigers and leopards.

Support the nation's campaign to combat terrorism by providing manpower and other resources needed to safeguard the United States and the American people.

Enforce the federal wildlife laws with a high priority on those violations that involve wild populations of federally protected species and commercial exploitation of protected wildlife resources.

Conduct an aggressive and proactive inspection program-through such means as task forces, profiling of potential violators and wildlife most at risk and educational programs - at all designated and border ports with an emphasis on large-scale, commercial shipments.

Provide law enforcement support, assistance and expertise to other Service programs and regional ecosystem teams.

Fisheries



- USFWS photo

The round goby is just one of many aquatic nuisance species threatening the Region. Service biologists are working closely with state, federal and tribal agencies to monitor and develop control techniques for these species.

Fully implement the terms of the U.S. vs. Michigan Consent Decree including technical fishery assistance, fishery monitoring in 1836 Treaty waters and enhanced lake trout propagation for interagency restoration programs.

Increase emphasis on the large rivers within Region 3 through cross-program initiatives.

Focus the Service's aquatic nuisance species program within Region 3 through the cooperative efforts of Fisheries and Ecological Services field stations.

Expand the roles and responsibilities of fisheries field stations, including an increased focus on monitoring and applied science, through full use of available expertise and capabilities.

Ensure that fishery field stations emphasize restoration and protection of aquatic habitats through involvement in all available activities including fish passage, private lands, coastal program, endangered species program and Natural Resource Damage Assessments (NRDA).

Put the Region 3 fishery program "on the map" through aggressive outreach, information and public education initiatives.

Fiscal Year 2002 Annual Work Plan

Program Priorities

External Affairs



- USFWS photo by Colette Charbonneau

Communicating the Service's activities through the media and other venues is the mission of the External Affairs Office.

Deliver quality communications in order to position the Service, in the Great Lakes-Big Rivers Region, as the recognized federal leader regarding fish and wildlife issues.

Strengthen ties and recognize field office accomplishments, clarify and promote field office outreach priorities, and facilitate communication with partners.

Build effective and harmonious work teams (including Regional Outreach Team comprised of both Regional office and field office employees) in the Regional Office which support pro-active, unified outreach and in-reach.

Restructure roles, responsibilities and workload among External Affairs Office personnel to efficiently and effectively complete priority work assignments and exploit new ways of doing business.

Improve the effectiveness of outreach and in-reach communications Region-wide.

Budget and Administration



- USFWS photo by Cathy Pollack

Helping to recruit and retain qualified, dedicated employees is one of the missions of the Budget and Administration Office.

Customer Service: Continue to explore ways to provide quality administrative support to the field and Regional Office.

Streamlining: Continue to explore ways to streamline the Regional administrative process.

Technology: Implement new and updated automated information systems such as IDEAS, upgrade computer networks and update web pages with relevant information.

Employees: Recruit, train, reward, and retain a quality workforce that reflects the diversity of this nation's population.

Fiscal Year 2002 Inside Region 3 Editions

The following pages are reproductions of the Great Lakes - Big Rivers Region monthly publication *Inside Region 3*.

This publication highlights a continual record of activity throughout the year and only represents a few of Region's accomplishments entered into the Accomplishment Reporting System.

October 2001, Page 11

Inside Region 3
An information product from the Accomplishment Reporting System
Volume 4, No. 1, October 2001

Inventory of Caves at Big Oaks NWR Leads to Discovery of 3 Species New to Science

A biological inventory of caves on Big Oaks National Wildlife Refuge (NWR) has yielded three species new to science. Julian J. Lawley, Ph.D., a cave biologist working under contract for the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, discovered the three cave-dwelling species during extensive 12-month inventory of cave systems and speleothems in 20 caves on the refuge. Twelve caves were also sampled for salamanders and other organisms. The discovery of the three new species will be available in May 2002 including literature study and management recommendations and further information on the cave-dwelling species.

Whoping Crane Eastern Partnership Historic Migration to Florida

The whoping crane, a critically endangered species, was sighted in Florida on October 11, 2001. The crane was the first of a group of about 100 cranes that are expected to migrate from the Ohio River to Florida. The crane is a member of the Graculidae family and is the only crane species found in North America. The crane is a member of the Graculidae family and is the only crane species found in North America. The crane is a member of the Graculidae family and is the only crane species found in North America.

November 2001, Page 20

Inside Region 3
An information product from the Accomplishment Reporting System
Volume 4, No. 2, November 2001

Federal Court Indicts Five in Missouri For Illegal Trafficking of Protected Big Cats

A federal court in Missouri has indicted five people in connection with the illegal trafficking of protected big cats. The indictments were filed in November 2001 and January 2002 by the U.S. Attorney for the Eastern District of Missouri. The indictments were filed in November 2001 and January 2002 by the U.S. Attorney for the Eastern District of Missouri.

Wisconsin DNR to Receive \$295,000 Coastal Wetlands Conservation Grant

The Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources (DNR) has been selected to receive a \$295,000 grant award through the National Coastal Wetlands Conservation Grant Program. The grant will be used to assist with the management and protection of coastal wetlands in Wisconsin.

December 2001, Page 29

Inside Region 3
An information product from the Accomplishment Reporting System
Volume 4, No. 3, December 2001

Prescribed Fire Unseasonably Mild Weather Extends Fall Burning Season

Unseasonably mild weather has extended the fall burning season for prescribed fire on the National Wildlife Refuge System. The mild weather has allowed for the continuation of prescribed fire activities, which are essential for the management of the refuge's natural resources.

January 2002, Page 37

Inside Region 3
An information product from the Accomplishment Reporting System
Volume 4, No. 4, January 2002

Ohio Among Eight States to Receive Federal Funds for Major Boating Projects

Ohio is one of eight states to receive federal funds for major boating projects. The funds will be used to improve boating facilities and safety on the state's waterways.

North America's First International Refuge Michigan's Detroit River International Wildlife Refuge Added to Refuge System

The Detroit River International Wildlife Refuge has been added to the National Wildlife Refuge System. The refuge is located on the Detroit River and is the first international refuge in North America.

February 2002, Page 47

Inside Region 3
An information product from the Accomplishment Reporting System
Volume 4, No. 5, February 2002

Service Proposal Would Grant States More Control of Resident Canada Geese

A service proposal would grant states more control over resident Canada geese. The proposal would allow states to manage geese populations and to implement control measures as needed.

5,200 Endangered Pallid Sturgeon Arrive at Neosho National Fish Hatchery

Five thousand two hundred endangered pallid sturgeon have arrived at the Neosho National Fish Hatchery. The sturgeon are being held in the hatchery's special care facility until they can be released into the wild.

March 2002, Page 58

Inside Region 3
An information product from the Accomplishment Reporting System
Volume 4, No. 6, March 2002

Blue Goose Lands in Washington for 99th Birthday Celebration

A blue goose has landed in Washington in celebration of the 99th birthday of the state. The goose is a member of the Anatidae family and is the only goose species found in Washington.

Information from the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service Region 3 Accomplishment Reporting System. Includes accomplishments for the period Feb. 8 - Mar. 6, 2002

April 2002, Page 68

Inside Region 3
An information product from the Accomplishment Reporting System for Mar. 25 - May 6, 2002

Whoping Cranes Return to Neosho

Whoping cranes have returned to the Neosho National Fish Hatchery. The cranes are being held in the hatchery's special care facility until they can be released into the wild.

Information from the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service Region 3 Accomplishment Reporting System. Includes accomplishments for the period Mar. 8 - May 6, 2002

May 2002, Page 81

Inside Region 3
An information product from the Accomplishment Reporting System for May 6 - May 31, 2002

International Migratory Bird Day Celebrated Across the Region

International Migratory Bird Day was celebrated across the region. The day was dedicated to the protection of migratory birds and their habitats.

Information from the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service Region 3 Accomplishment Reporting System. Includes accomplishments for the period May 6 - May 31, 2002

June 2002, Page 94

Inside Region 3
An information product from the Accomplishment Reporting System for May 31 - June 30, 2002

National Fishing Week Events Attract Visitors and Highlight Fishing Opportunities

National Fishing Week events have attracted visitors and highlighted fishing opportunities. The events were held at various locations throughout the region and were a great success.

12th Annual Youth Fishing Day

The 12th annual youth fishing day was held. The day was dedicated to the promotion of youth fishing and the protection of the environment.

Information from the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service Region 3 Accomplishment Reporting System. Includes accomplishments for the period May 31 - June 30, 2002

July 2002, Page 107

Inside Region 3
An information product from the Accomplishment Reporting System for June 30 - July 31, 2002

Information from the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service Region 3 Accomplishment Reporting System. Includes accomplishments for the period June 30 - July 31, 2002

August 2002, Page 122

Inside Region 3
An information product from the Accomplishment Reporting System for July 31 - August 31, 2002

Nation's Smallest Refuge Provides Habitat for Common Terns

The nation's smallest refuge provides habitat for common terns. The refuge is located on the coast of the United States and is a great place for bird watching.

Information from the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service Region 3 Accomplishment Reporting System. Includes accomplishments for the period July 31 - August 31, 2002

September 2002, Page 139

Inside Region 3
An information product from the Accomplishment Reporting System for Sept. 30 - Sept. 30, 2002

Information from the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service Region 3 Accomplishment Reporting System. Includes accomplishments for the period Sept. 30 - Sept. 30, 2002